

FAQ's About Distance Education

Q: What is distance education?

A: Any educational medium in which the instructor separates the learner.

Q: What are the formats for distance education?

A: Printed correspondence courses, cable television, audio and video conferencing, cable television, CD/DVD/VHS, satellite conferencing, and computer-based training including webcasts.

Q: What is satellite conferencing?

A: Satellite conferencing, broadcast, telecast, link, downlink, or uplink can be used to describe the process of acquiring a video feed from a space satellite for unlimited reception within a public domain.

Q: What are the pros and cons of satellite conferencing?

A: Pros – very cost effective, many programs available, live interaction with instructor and participants, can be taped for later viewing, participants not required to have technical skills. Cons – may have limited time for questions and answers, no one-on-one time with instructor/participant, production time and costs may be extensive.

Q: What is webcasting?

A: Webcasting, webcast, or web streaming is a video file in which viewers can view live and archived video feeds from the convenience of their personal computer using a high-speed internet connection and a media player such as Windows Media Player ® or Real Player ®.

Q: What are the pros and cons of viewing webcasts?

A: Pros – Extremely cost effective, excellent for large numbers at unlimited locations, very interactive, content can be updated, online technical assistance is available. Cons – Connectivity and speed, hardware availability, software and individual competency, and program visual aids.

Q: Are continuing education units (CEU's) available for distance education?

A: Yes, many public health related distance education training programs are CEU providers.

History of distance education

- 1436 – Gutenberg (Printing Press)
- 1775 – Continental Congress (Mail System)
- 1876 – Bell (Telephone)
- 1920's – Farnsworth (Television)
- 1950's – Ampex (Videotape Recorder)
- 1957 – Sputnik (Satellite)
- 1980's – Apple (Home Computers)

Source: Smith, Michael: Technical Aspects of Distance Learning.